

# News Release



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

*For Immediate Release*  
January 13, 2017

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Evaluating Federal Protection for Whitebark Pine

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**DENVER** – Whitebark pine is a tough tree surviving in poor soils, withstanding whipping winds on steep mountain slopes. Often dwarfed by exposure and hugging the ground, whitebark pine grow higher in elevation than any other pine, all the way up to the tree line in the Pacific Coast and Cascade ranges, Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains.

But, millions of acres of whitebark pine are infected with white pine blister rust, caused by a nonnative tree killing fungus, and mountain pine beetles, which are the size of a grain of rice, but carry a fungus that blocks water and nutrients, thus starving the tree.

In 2008, the National Resource Defense Council petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to list whitebark pine under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It has been a candidate for federal protection for six years, but other wildlife, plants and insects have been higher priority. Every year the Service has evaluated the population status and threats to whitebark pine's continued existence, and we committed in our National Listing Workplan to make a decision whether it should be proposed for listing by 2019.

To help us make the most informed decision, the Service is starting an in-depth review of the best available scientific and commercial information called a Species Status Assessment. We are asking the public to submit any documentation on whitebark pine, such as data, maps, methods used to gather and analyze data, copies of pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources and any spatial data. Submissions are requested by February 20, 2017 either electronically to [Amy\\_Nicholas@fws.gov](mailto:Amy_Nicholas@fws.gov) or via mail to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wyoming Field Office  
Attn: Amy Nicholas, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
5353 Yellowstone Rd, Suite 308A  
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Please note that all data and information submitted to us, including personal information, such as names and addresses, will become part of the public record.

To learn more about the Species Status Assessment framework, visit [https://www.fws.gov/endangered/improving\\_ESA/ssa.html](https://www.fws.gov/endangered/improving_ESA/ssa.html). To learn more about whitebark pine, visit <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/plants/whitebarkpine/>.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.*

*For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/>. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnpairie/>.*

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